

How to Work with Group, Wing, and the LO

Lesson Objective:	Comprehend the relationship between the squadron and group (and/or) wing, and the LO.
Behavioral Objectives: At the end of this segment you will be able to:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain the function of groups and wings.2. Describe group and wing staff functions.3. Describe the function and authority of the group and wing commander.4. Describe the unit commander's relationship with the LO.5. Explain the importance of and different techniques for working together with group and wing.

Overview

While you are the commander of your squadron, and are pivotal in its success, you cannot work alone. While your squadron works autonomously in your local area, it is really part of a larger organization - the group or the wing. Your success - or failure - directly affects them, and your responsibility as a squadron commander is to support their efforts. They are what binds your squadrons efforts to the efforts of your fellow squadrons, and can create what is known in military terms as a force multiplier: a resource which makes an entity stronger when working together than simply the sum of its parts.

This class will teach you about the functions of the group or wing, the people who work for it, especially your boss; and finally help you to see what you can do to work more effectively with them.

The Group/Wing

The key to understanding your place within the group or wing is to understand their functions. The main function of a group is to oversee the operations of a number of squadrons within the wing structure. Normally groups are formed within specific areas, and are used when there are either too many squadrons, or the squadrons are dispersed in too large an area for the wing to handle.

As a practical matter, groups have been known to focus more command attention to some areas rather than others. When this is the case, many times they focus more on the operational facets rather than administrative aspects of CAP's mission. When groups are extremely large, their network for oversight is more extensive.

Groups

- Oversees squadrons assigned to it, subordinate to the _____
- Used when there are _____ squadrons or when squadrons are _____ over too wide an area for the wing to handle on its own

The main function of a wing is to oversee the operations of the groups or squadrons within a state. It is at the first level of the corporate structure, in that its commander is a corporate officer of Civil Air Patrol, in contrast to group and squadron commanders who are not. It gives him or her an extraordinary amount of latitude when it comes to running the wing.

The wing supervises all aspects of operations, training, and support within its state. Its command structure is rigid, and there is little room for choice as to which areas deserve attention. It is for this reason that wing staffs are normally quite large. It takes many people to assist the wing commander in operating the wing.

Wings

- Oversees the operation of groups and squadrons assigned
- Is the first level on the _____ ladder
- Oversees all aspects of operations, training, and support of the state; is responsible to its CAP region

The Staff

The staff of a group or wing really has one purpose: to assist the commander in operating his unit. All other responsibilities fall under that one main heading. In addition, the staff officers are obligated by CAP directives to be responsible for certain aspects of wing operations. (For instance, Only the Wing Commander, Vice Commander, or Director of Cadet Programs may certify cadet orientation flights and have them reimbursed by HQ CAP.) Only the wing (or higher headquarters) can hand out 101 cards.

Staff officers cannot order you or your staff to do anything, but they can pass on orders concerning their functional area from their commander. The actual amount of authority they are given comes from their commander, and it will vary from wing to wing. This means that they can talk to you about compliance or special interest items, and do so with wing authority. It is a fine line, and problems are usually solved by the commander. Talk to your wing commander to see how the relationship works for your wing.

You have an obligation to keep the wing and group staff officers advised about the fitness of your unit in their areas. This may be done directly or through your staff. You report to them the information they need to advise wing group or wing commander about the fitness of their unit as a whole, in accordance with CAP directives.

They, in turn, are obligated to keep you informed about the latest changes within their staff areas and to ensure that you get timely information and resources to allow your squadron to do its job properly.

The Staff

- Assists the group/wing commander in _____ the unit
- Obligated by CAP directives to be responsible for certain wing operations (wing only)
- Cannot _____ you to do anything, but can pass on orders from their commander
- Commanders will tell you how much authority they've _____ to their staffs.
- You must keep the staff advised of operations concerning their functional areas
- They should keep you informed about _____

Your Commander (The Boss)

Your group or wing commander is your immediate superior. As well as running your unit, you are also your commander's representative to your unit. The wing commander is particularly important to you because of both the nature and scope of his authority.

The wing commander has authority over all the units within the wing, and is accountable to the region commander. S/He is responsible for successfully performing the missions of CAP within the state, and as unit commanders, you are his/her primary assistants. Your ability to be successful is in large measure the key to the success of the wing. Your goal is to help him/her to carry out their vision and goals for the wing.

If this was the wing commander's only responsibility, that job really wouldn't be much different from yours. But there is much more to the job than that.

As wing commander, s/he is the number one representative of Civil Air Patrol to your state, and most importantly is a CAP corporate officer. You are not. This gives the wing commander an extraordinary amount of authority and responsibility.

As a corporate officer, s/he has the final responsibility for corporate assets within the wing, and can work directly with the state to negotiate agreements on a variety of issues. S/he can ask to petition the state directly for funding, and must do so within the limits of state and federal laws, and Air Force and CAP directives. His/her decisions more often than not have legal implications for CAP as a whole. The unit commander cannot share this responsibility.

It is in part because of these responsibilities that s/he depends on you. S/he can't run the wing alone, and you speak for him/her within your unit, within the limits of your authority as outlined in CAP directives. While you can't make some of the decisions s/he does, you can help the wing commander to carry them out.

This is why the relationship you have with your wing commander is so important. Your relationship should be professional and cordial. It is essential that both of you are very clear about what needs to be done. It's desirable to view your commander as a mentor. If circumstances prevent that however, remember your obligations are to: carry out his/her lawful orders, provide him/her with reliable resources (your squadron), and through the work of your squadron assist him/her in carrying out the wing's goals and objectives.

Your Commander

- Is your immediate superior
- _____ is particularly important to you.
- Has authority over all units within _____.
- Responsible for accomplishing the _____ within the state.
- Responsible to the _____ commander.
- Is a CAP _____ officer
- #1 CAP representative in the state.
- Can _____ within the state.
- Is responsible for all CAP _____ in the state.

Wing's Air Force Liaison Office

What about your relationship with the Air Force wing liaison office (LO)? As you may recall, the LO is responsible for providing "advice, liaison, and oversight" of CAP activities, especially when those activities involve Air Force personnel and resources. Events and activities in which the LO may typically play a role include: arranging for base tours and orientation rides in Air Force aircraft, arranging for airlift (though rarely at the unit level), scheduling and administering the Cadet Program's General Carl A. Spaatz Award examination, and clarifying Air Force procedures.

Though specific procedures vary by wing, basically the LO should be kept informed whenever the unit participates in an activity with the Air Force, or when requesting Air Force resources or assistance. For instance, your unit wishes to move its headquarters onto an Air Force facility – you must work through the LO to establish the necessary contacts and ensure that you are following proper procedures. Another example, a USAF base public affairs officer (PAO), or other official, offers KC-135 (refueling tanker) orientation flights to your unit. When you ask the wing if you can go ahead with the activity, also send an information copy to the LO.

Another job of the LO is to visit squadrons. These visits range from participating in awards presentations to the actual evaluation of programs. LOs also work with the region to manage the Civil Air Patrol-Reserve Assistance Program (CAP-RAP) within their wing. In CAP-RAP, Air Force reservists are assigned to provide advice, liaison, and oversight at the squadron level, and many units have them.

This is only a broad overview; remember that specific guidance and conditions concerning Air Force wing liaison activities vary from wing to wing, so it's a good idea to call the LO to learn about their specific operations.

Wing's Air Force Liaison Office

- Provides _____, _____, and _____.
- Events and activities in which the LO plays a role
 - _____
 - _____
- LO's should be informed when:
 - _____
 - _____
- LO visits and _____

Working Together

The best thing you can do to work better with your group or wing is to understand how important it is. The group or wing won't run without your unit, and your unit won't run without their assistance and guidance.

The first thing to remember is the importance of effective communication. It is your responsibility to ensure that you receive the information you need from the group or wing and in turn to make sure they get what they need from you. They share an obligation for effective communications, but as a unit commander it is your responsibility to stay informed. If you have a question, ask. As a commander, it is never an acceptable answer to say, "The wing didn't tell me."

The next thing you can do is ask your commander what he expects of you as a commander, and from your unit. When that is established he should tell you what you can expect from him and his staff. He should also give you the chance to ask for specific things to make your job easier. This should not be a one time conversation. Throughout your tenure, you should give and receive feedback. It's the most effective way to see how well you are doing.

Still another way is to encourage interface between your staff officers and those from the group or wing. They can talk to each other about what they should expect from one another; and clear up differences or problems as they arise. It also makes sure that efforts aren't being duplicated or misguided. Think of some other ways to work more effectively with your group or wing.

Working Together

- Understand the functions of the group and wing
- Remember the importance of _____
- Provide and ask for _____ from your commander
- Encourage _____ between your staff and group and wing staffs